

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended) An implant for the spinal column, comprising:
an elongated body positionable in a spinal disc space, said body comprising a convexly curved upper surface orientable toward an endplate of an upper vertebra and a convexly curved lower surface orientable toward an endplate of a lower vertebra:

a leading end portion and an opposite trailing end portion;

a pair of sidewalls extending between said leading end portion and said trailing end portion;

a cavity between said leading end portion, said trailing end portion, and said sidewalls, said cavity opening at said upper surface and said lower surface of said body;
~~and~~

wherein said body includes a height between said upper and lower surfaces corresponding to a desired disc space height between the upper vertebra endplate and the lower vertebra endplate, wherein said leading end portion is structured for insertion into the disc space in a collapsed condition and said height is sized to restore the collapsed disc space to the desired disc space height as the body is inserted in the collapsed disc space, and further wherein:

said upper and lower surfaces each include a number of engagement members therealong and projecting outwardly therefrom to engage bony tissue of the adjacent vertebral endplate when said body is positioned in the spinal disc space;

said engagement members comprise a number of teeth along portions of said sidewalls extending along said cavity; and

said teeth each include a leading end wall sloped toward said leading end portion and a trailing end wall opposite said leading wall, said trailing end wall being generally orthogonally oriented relative to the respective one of said convexly curved upper and lower surfaces from which said trailing end wall extends.

2. (Original) The implant of claim 1, wherein said upper surface and said lower surface are each convexly curved along an entire length of said body.

3. (Original) The implant of claim 2, wherein said leading end portion includes a nose rounded between said upper surface and said lower surface.

4. (Withdrawn) The implant of claim 3, wherein said nose is rounded between said sidewalls.

5. (Original) The implant of claim 1, wherein said sidewalls are parallel to one another.

6. (Original) The implant of claim 1, wherein said body includes:
a first notch in a first one of said sidewalls; and
a second notch in a second one of said pair of sidewalls, said first and second notches opening at a proximal end wall of said body.

7. (Original) The implant of claim 6, wherein said proximal end wall is planar and extends between said sidewalls and said upper and lower surfaces.

8. (Original) The implant of claim 6, further comprising a coupling member having first and second fingers positionable in respective ones of said first and second notches to secure said body to said coupling member.

9. (Original) The implant of claim 8, wherein said coupling member comprises a distal portion of an insertion instrument.

10. (Original) The implant of claim 8, wherein a width of said coupling member between outer lateral surfaces of said fingers is less than a width between outer lateral surfaces of said sidewalls at least when said fingers are in said notches.

Claims 11-12 (Cancelled)

13. (Currently amended) The implant of claim 1, ~~claim 12~~, wherein said upper and lower surfaces are substantially smooth along said leading end portion and said trailing end portion.

Claim 14 (Cancelled)

15. (Currently amended) The implant of claim 1, ~~claim 14~~, further comprising a rounded transition surface extending between said leading end wall and said trailing end wall of each of said teeth.

16. (Original) The implant of claim 15, wherein said transition surfaces of said teeth along each of said upper and lower surfaces define an arc along said body, said arc defining a first radius.

17. (Currently amended) The implant of claim 16, wherein said upper surface and lower surface each extend along an arc defined by a second radius, said first radius being greater than said second radius.

18. (Currently amended) An implant insertable in a disc space between adjacent vertebrae, comprising:

an elongated body having a distal leading end portion sized for insertion into a non-distracted, collapsed disc space, said implant having a height between an upper surface and a lower surface thereof adapted to restore said non-distracted, collapsed disc space to a desired disc space height as said body is impacted into said non-distracted collapsed disc space, wherein said body is implantable in the restored disc space to post-operatively maintain said desired disc space height, wherein said body includes:

a trailing end portion having a proximal end wall opposite a leading end nose of said body; ~~and~~

said upper surface and said lower surface extend along said leading end portion and said trailing end portion, said upper and lower surfaces each including a convexly

curved surface profile between said leading end nose and said proximal end wall of said body;

a first sidewall and an opposite second sidewall; and

a cavity extending between said upper and lower surfaces, said first and second sidewalls and said leading and trailing end portions extending about said cavity, wherein said upper and lower surfaces are substantially smooth along said leading end portion and said trailing end portion, wherein said upper and lower surfaces each include a number of engagement members therealong and projecting outwardly therefrom to engage bony tissue of the adjacent vertebral endplate when said body is positioned in the spinal disc space and said engagement members comprise a number of teeth along portions of said sidewalls extending along said cavity.

Claim 19 (Cancelled)

20. (Currently amended) The implant of claim 18, claim 19, wherein said sidewalls are parallel to one another.

21. (Original) The implant of claim 18, wherein said leading end nose is rounded between said upper surface and said lower surface.

22. (Withdrawn) The implant of claim 21, wherein said nose is rounded between opposite sidewalls of said body.

23. (Currently amended) The implant of claim 18, wherein said body includes:
a first notch in said firsta-first sidewall of said body; and
a second notch in said seconda-second sidewall of said body, said first and second notches opening at said proximal end wall of said body.

24. (Original) The implant of claim 23, wherein said proximal end wall is planar and extends between said sidewalls and said upper and lower surfaces.

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25. (Original) The implant of claim 23, further comprising a coupling member having first and second fingers positionable in respective ones of said first and second notches to secure said body to said coupling member.

26. (Original) The implant of claim 25, wherein said coupling member comprises a distal portion of an insertion instrument.

27. (Original) The implant of claim 25, wherein a width of said coupling member between outer lateral surfaces of said fingers is less than a width between outer lateral surfaces of said sidewalls at least when said fingers are in said notches.

Claims 28- 30 (Cancelled)

31. (Currently amended) The implant of claim 18, ~~claim 30~~, wherein said teeth each include a leading end wall sloped toward said leading end portion and a trailing end wall opposite said leading wall, said trailing end wall being generally orthogonally oriented relative to the respective one of said upper and lower surfaces from which said trailing end wall extends.

32. (Original) The implant of claim 31, further comprising a rounded transition surface extending between said leading end wall and said trailing end wall of each of said teeth.

33. (Original) The implant of claim 32, wherein said transition surfaces of said teeth along each of said upper and lower surfaces define an arc along said body, said arc forming a first radius.

34. (Original) The implant of claim 33, wherein said upper and lower surface each extend along an arc defined by a second radius, said first radius being greater than said second radius.

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Claims 35-48 (Cancelled)

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